



Subject:	Future City Centre Programme: City Centre Connectivity Study - Draft Vision
Date:	12th February, 2020
Reporting Officer:	Sean Dolan, Acting Director, City Regeneration and Development
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Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	To present to the Committee the draft Phase 1 of the City Centre Connectivity Study and seek approval to progress to Phases 2 and 3.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is requested to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• endorse Phase 1 of the City Centre Connectivity Study;• agree to progress to Phases 2 and 3; and• agree to develop demonstration and pilot projects that helps builds interest and discussion in the city about the future shape and functions of the city centre.

3.0	Main Report
	<p data-bbox="256 250 692 286"><u>City Centre Connectivity Study</u></p> <p data-bbox="165 309 1461 645">3.1 The Belfast Agenda outlines the City’s ambition to promote the development of sustainable transport and includes promoting walking and cycling. The support, and concept, of sustainable place-making in the city reflects one of the key policies in the Belfast City Centre Regeneration and Investment Strategy (BCCRIS), which seeks to create a green, walkable, cycable city centre. It specifically references the lack of green space and tree-lined streets, and identifies the need for rebalancing the scales between tarmac and soft landscaping and recognises that there is no provision for children in the city centre.</p> <p data-bbox="165 719 1461 1205">3.2 Recent events in Belfast City Centre, including the fire at Bank Buildings in 2018, have prompted calls to examine how the heart of the city could be reimagined to create more sustainable, liveable and people-focussed places that better meet the needs of those who live, work, visit and invest here. The future success of Belfast as a regional driver will require a clear understanding of the changing role of the City Centre, and ensuring the right mix of offices, retail, hotels, tourist attractions, creative industries, universities and colleges, housing and social infrastructure. It is acknowledged that the city centre must adopt to provide the requirements of this changing environment and must also provide for inclusive access and growth, ensuring all communities have the opportunity to benefit from enhanced employment, leisure and social opportunities.</p> <p data-bbox="165 1290 1461 1576">3.3 At the City Council’s City Growth and Regeneration Committee meeting on 5th June and subsequent amendments at Council on 1st July, it was agreed to examine how the city centre should develop to take into account the emerging changing use in a way that is accessible and welcoming for all, and to include an exploration into models of pedestrianisation and other initiatives that facilitates the development of the city centre enabling both pedestrian enjoyment and sustainable transport access.</p> <p data-bbox="165 1648 1461 1778">3.4 The Council, DfC and DfI agreed to jointly commission the City Centre Connectivity Study that will develop a shared vision for the city centre. After a competitive procurement process, a multi-disciplinary team from Jacobs was appointed.</p> <p data-bbox="165 1850 1461 1980">3.5 The aim of the Connectivity Study is to agree a shared approach to creating a more attractive, accessible, safe and vibrant city centre which will improve economic, societal, health and environmental wellbeing for all by:</p>

- creating healthy, vibrant, sustainable and shared spaces;
- providing improved access for people walking and cycling;
- creating places for people to live;
- encouraging regeneration; and
- enhancing civic pride to attract local people and visitors

3.6 The primary study area is the central core of Belfast city centre and key connecting corridors (see Figure 1). The wider area of impact is defined by the Inner Ring Road, and the study will seek to understand and address connectivity issues experienced along key arterial routes and how these affect adjacent communities.

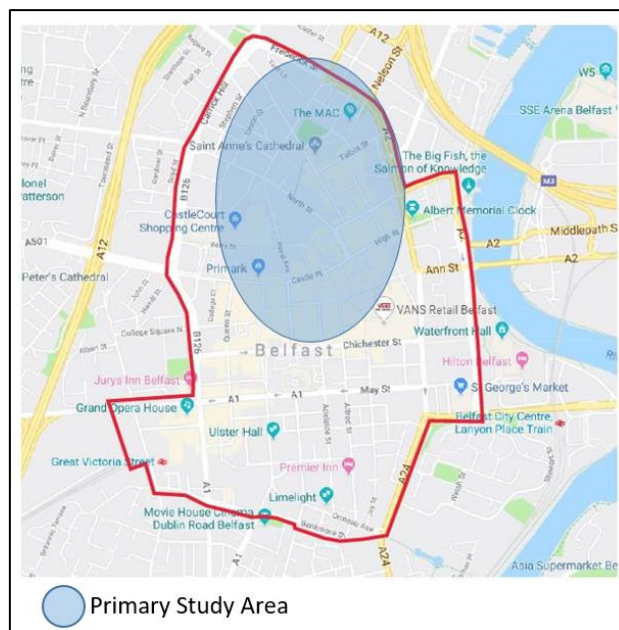


Figure 1 Map of Study Area

Phase 1 Sept – Dec 2019:

3.7 *Development of a shared Vision*

This Phase is complete. Throughout Phase 1 Jacobs worked closely with officers and departmental officials and stakeholders to develop the draft Vision. Within this initial Phase there were three elements of work that informed the shared Vision for the city centre;

- Stage one - *Understanding Best Practice* considered how Belfast could address current issues, through analysis of established benefits and dis-benefits of approaches that other cities with similar characteristics have implemented to transform their city centre.

- Stage two - *Understanding Belfast City Centre* looked at how the city centre functions to ensure a balance between the different requirements and needs of users in terms of access, city centre servicing, deliveries, movement and footfall, modes of transport and land use. This Stage also analysed the changing nature of the city centre, including mapping of emerging and built developments that will deliver diversification of the city centre including enhanced tourism, city centre living, working, leisure and open space, and green infrastructure.
- Building on this information and best practice, Stage three resulted in an ambitious Vision, *A Bolder Vision for Belfast*.

Stakeholder Engagement

3.8 Statutory bodies, businesses, interest groups, communities and resident's groups will be engaged throughout each Phase of the study. The following engagement took place during the development of the draft Vision in Phase 1:

- 1-1 engagement with key stakeholders, statutory authorities and delivery partners;
- Residents Workshop with communities in and surrounding the city centre
- Visioning Workshop with key civic partners and organisations
- Political briefing (invites to all Councillors and Belfast MLAs and MPs)
- Briefings to BCC Chief Executive and DfI and DfC Permanent Secretaries

Final draft Vision: A Bolder Vision for Belfast

3.9 This document sets out the Case for Change, learning from other cities of similar size and Visioning Principles that underpin the Vision. The Vision is ambitious and challenging and provides the framework for 13 'What If?' ideas that were identified through the engagement events and benchmarked against the Visioning Principles. These are high-level and are intended to inspire potential solutions to shape a dynamic 21st century city. In order to achieve this level of transformation, future changes must be radical. This will present challenges, and require intensive partnership working to maintain focus and alignment of resources on the overall mission and vision of the Connectivity Study. Commitment across statutory partners and stakeholder organisations to ensure coherence, momentum and phased delivery is required as is communication and engagement with citizens to support behaviour change and to create people-focused city.

3.10	<p>The Visioning Principles, as identified in Appendix 1 '<i>A Bolder Vision for Belfast</i>' are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating a healthy, shared, vibrant and sustainable environment that promotes wellbeing for all, inclusive growth and innovation. • Fundamentally changing the centre of Belfast to prioritise integrated walking, cycling and public transport and end the dominance of the car. • Providing lively, safe and green streets linking inclusive shared spaces to promote resilience and enhance our built heritage. • Removing severance and barriers to movement between the centre of Belfast and the surrounding communities to improve access for all.
3.11	<p>The draft document has been agreed with the Permanent Secretaries for DfI and DfC and the Council's Chief Executive and is currently undergoing Ministerial review and approval within DfI and DfC.</p>
3.12	<p>In early January 2020 BCC, DfC and DfI commenced the scoping of Phases 2 and 3 and intend to procure both Phases in April, with a projected timeframe as outlined below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phase 2 Spring/Summer 2020: Develop an action plan to outline scenarios and delivery options based on the Future Vision. The action plan and options will be used to inform further discussion with key civic partners, communities, residents, Third Sector organisations, interest groups, statutory authorities and city leaders. • Phase 3 Autumn/Winter 2020/21: A 12 week, city-wide public consultation on the options to deliver the Future Vision and the emerging actions.
3.13	<p>Members should be aware that currently there is no capital funding aligned to delivering the outcomes of the Phase 2 and 3 works, however this work will be critical to informing the design criteria of key infrastructure projects including, but not limited to, Streets Ahead Phase 3 & 5, and the BRT Phase 2 projects. The ambition of the three organisations is that this work will help to shape and inform strategies, policies and projects going forward, pending approvals and adoption as outlined in section 3.11 of this paper.</p>
3.14	<p><u>Equality, Good Relations and Rural Needs Implications</u></p> <p>There are no Equality, Good Relations or Rural Needs implications at this stage. The Council's Equality and Diversity Officer will be consulted during any future consultation</p>

3.15	<p>process and any proposed approach will be subject to the Council’s screening requirements to ensure that Equality and Good Relations implications and Rural Needs are fully considered.</p> <p><u>Finance and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>The budget requirements for Phases 2 and 3 are currently under assessment along with the scope and specification. Whilst there will clearly be both financial and human resources attached to taking forward the City Centre Connectivity Study, the specific resource implications are still to be determined in-line with the emerging programme of work. It is expected that the councils contribution to Phase 2 and 3 will be meet from within existing department budgets subject to approval from the Committee at a future date.</p>
4.0	Documents Attached
	Appendix - <i>A Bolder Vision for Belfast</i>